



AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT

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WOUNDED KNEE LEGAL DEFENSE-OFFENSE COMMITTEE

NATIVE AMERICAN SPEAKERS BUREAU

PRESS RELEASE

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C The Fifth Annual International Convention of the American Indian Movement ^{was held} convened on a mesa, six miles southwest of Farmington, New Mexico, June 6th through 16th, 1975. Although the convention was plagued by several serious incidents such as the attempted assassination of Russell Means in North Dakota, and the difficulty in securing a site ^{for the convention} - several hundred Indian ^{people} representing almost all Indian Nations from throughout North America, were in attendance. ^{A statement from AIM says}

For ten days the people participated in traditional, spiritual ceremonies and cultural events. Elders, spiritual leaders, young people, men and women of many nations spoke of their many concerns.

After ten days of deliberations, and in counsel with the Great Spirit, and to insure a Sovereign Native future in the Western Hemisphere, we adopt the following course of action.

CULTURAL REVOLUTION

We recognize that the three major enemies of Indian People are:

- 1) The Institution of the Christian Church.
- 2) Anti-Indian Education.
- 3) United States Government.

1) The Institution of the Christian Church

The Institutions of the Christian Churches have failed in their mission. The continued practice of Spiritual and Cultural ethnocide must stop. The Christian Church must not be allowed to enslave the minds of our children.

The time has come for the Churches in this country to realize the affect, in most cases, an adverse affect, that they have had on Indian people. They have a responsibility to begin advocating and implementing real Indian self-determination.

Since their existence in this country, they have exercised a policy of ethnocide towards Indian people. This very sophisticated policy is still in existence today. The American Indian Movement takes the position that the Churches must begin the process of return of land, the support of effective programs controlled and maintained by Indian people, and to use their influence and power, in terms of both monetary and lobbying support to bring about positive change for Indian people. If the American Indian Movement does not see this kind of change, within the Church bodies, our only alternative is to use every means necessary - both legal and otherwise, to have them removed from Indian communities in this country.

At the same time through our Elders and traditional spiritual Leaders, our people must be given the opportunity to learn of their traditional ways, spiritual ceremonies, and the ways given to us by the Great Spirit at the time of Creation, that served our spiritual needs for thousands of years, before the coming of the Missionaries.

For at least 60,000 years, the Red Man of the Western Hemisphere has

lived in Peace and Harmony with the Sacred Earth and the Universe, and with our brothers and sisters, all living things. We are Spiritual People.

2) Anti-Indian Education

We recognize that the existing Institutions of Education have failed Indian people. We must correct the distortions and untruths of History, introduce Indian curriculums and philosophy. And in doing so, we will then bring about pride in being Indian.

Survival School - The American Indian Movement has experienced the effectiveness of the Survival School System. It is our belief that in order for our children and our unborn to survive, we as Indian people must have control of our own education.

Our efforts are going to be stepped up in the creation of more schools and at the same time we are not going to relieve existing educational systems of their responsibility to Indian children. We will organize Indian people to TAKE CONTROL of the school systems affecting our children, including Public, Parochial and Bureau of Indian Affairs Boarding Schools.

3) United States Government

Practices of Paternalism - For centuries, the United States Governments' colonial acts of military aggression, legislative and judicial fiat has continued, unrelentless to extinguish our Sovereign aboriginal rights. This same United States government has continued to deny the Sovereign Indigenous people their God given right to self-determination.

Therefore, we must do everything within our power to cast off the yolk of colonial rule.

Sovereignty - Self Determination - the termination of all non-Indian philosophy and policies, without termination of United States responsi-

bilities to Indian Nations under Treaty Law.

"At the time of Creation, the Great Spirit imbued the Red Man with certain inalienable, sovereign aboriginal rights that cannot and must not be trampled on by anyone.

Rights given by the Great Spirit can only be extinguished by the Great Spirit." (Waubun Nuwi Nini, Ojibwa)

American Indian Movement Position on Sovereignty - In an effort to stop Native American oppression....Native Americans must assert their God Given right to govern themselves. Therefore: tribal governing entities of all Indian Nations must sever themselves from the Paternalistic control of the United States Government, and enforce the Health, Education and Welfare annuities which we now receive as payment for vast tracts of land - obtained through subversion, coercion and theft. Tribal governments must review and upgrade all grazing, timber, mineral and all other leases with non-Indian lessees.

We must implement an Indian de-urbanization program for our people to return to our Sovereign Indian lands....to rebuild our Nations.

We must support those existing tribal leaders who support the Struggle for Independence, those tribal leaders who have become puppets to the United States State Government and to special interest groups who continue to exploit and desecrate our lands must be removed....through the elective process when possible, and when the Will of the people is ignored, then by whatever actions necessary - WE WILL NOT TOLERATE IMPOSED LEADERSHIP.

ALCOHOLISM AND DRUGS

The by-product of spiritual and cultural Ethnocide practiced by both the Institutions of Church and Education, have brought about the destruction of Identity, Pride and Dignity in our people. Out of despair, our people turn to alcohol and drugs. We recognize that alcoholism and drug addiction are only a symptom of the more deeply rooted disease of cultural and spiritual Ethnocide.

As we treat this rooted disease by way of Cultural Revolution, through Traditional Spiritual Teachings and through the Survival School System, we must remove the source of alcohol and drugs from our reservations.

Therefore, we are immediately outlawing the sale of alcohol and drugs within our reservation boundaries, according to Treaty Law.

In the event that Indian people are in the liquor business - they will be given until midnight December 29th, 1975 - to change their business to one that will benefit our people....not destroy us.

Non-Indian dealers of liquor and alcohol will be stopped from selling these products immediately.

Additionally, the transportation of alcohol onto reservations will, and must be halted immediately, according to Treaty Law.

The sale of drugs and narcotics, and the pushers who sell them must curtail their destructive practices immediately, those who continue to deal their products will be stopped. Off-reservation liquor establishments that exploit, abuse and enslave our people must be closed through a boycott and when that fails, by whatever actions necessary.

Unless we bring about a Cultural Revolution within our communities, unless we can win the struggle for liberation from alcoholism and drugs

within ourselves, as a people, we will never win in our Struggle for Liberation and Independance. In fact, we will become a lost civilization. WE MUST NOT ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN.

CULTURAL RACISM (America's Longest Undeclared War)

The root cause for the practice of genocide that continues against the Native Indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere - is cultural racism; a cultural condition, a condition that has been ingrained into the basic fabric of White Colonial society in the Western Hemisphere.

For 483 years, we have suffered under the yoke of a dominant White Colonial rule - under the disguise of law and order, we have been brutalized, assaulted, tortured and murdered, by white police agencies on our reservations, and in our homes.

The racist attack continues against Indian people in off-reservation white communities, not only by the morally corrupt police officials, but also by the morally and spiritually corrupt White Societies; who allow these acts to continue.

On some reservations, Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian police, lackys for the Colonial United States Government, are also guilty of these crimes against their own people.

Colonel George Chivington at Sand Creek, Colorado in 1864 - The Calleys and Medinas of Viet Nam - The torture murderers of Raymond Yellow Thunder in Gordon, Nebraska, 1972 - The torture murderers of Navajo men in Farmington, New Mexico in 1974 - and the hundreds like them who have inflicted violence, torture and murder against our people; are only symptoms of Cultural Racism.

White civilization must now recognize, the stark reality of who they

are - they must recognize while they hide behind the facade of goodness of their Church, that this is only theoretic, and by their own actions of violence throughout the world - they stand exposed.

They must now re-educate themselves and their future generations to the truth....through education they can be taught how to become humane.

This must happen, if we are to end White America's longest undeclared war; a 483 year war that continues against our culture, our spirituality, our people, and against Sacred Mother Earth. WE CANNOT TOLERATE THIS WAR.

We must recognize, that even though these acts of aggression are carried out by individuals - that these are crimes of cultural racism, crimes of White Society collectively.

When these crimes are committed against our people, then those White communities must be dealt with immediately by these actions:

- 1) All Indians and supporters totally boycott trade to these communities
- 2) That Indian Nations withdraw all tribal moneys from white controlled banks and institutions.
- 3) That Indian Nations withdraw their students who attend white institutions of education, and start legal actions to halt all funds directed to these institutions.
- 4) That all commerce and travel on and across Indian lands be halted.
- 5) That all power plants, dams, pipelines, oil and gas fields, and non-Indian mining and timber operations be seized and/or halted.
- 6) Immediate retaliation against these communities by whatever actions are necessary.

We take this action not out of Hate for White Society- but out of Love for our people.

We take this action not out of Revenge - but to halt the violence against our people.

When White Society learns how to become humane, only then will we be able to survive in our own land.

" America, we dedicate our lives to these truths, for the indigenous people are the evidence of truth in the Western Hemisphere.

And if you have not forgotten the spirit which brought you to our sacred lands and eventually led you to the establishment of your government in 1776, you may still recognize the truth.

We pray to the Great Spirit that you can.

May sacred Mother Earth endure all the sufferings."

(Waubun Nuwi Nini, Ojibwa

for the American Indian Movement)